1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

423 use. This is an informal custom rather than a rigid rule. Should another person want to plant on the ground, he would usually talk the matter over first with the son or daughter of the person who had formerly planted on it, and invariably he would receive permission to plant. But there is no way of preventing him from planting the ground should he desire to do so without asking permission. The land is considered as belonging to the community, although it is customary for individuals to plant on certain sections of it.

The ownership of the village land is based on the principle of locality, as differing from the ownership of the clan land, which is based upon the principle of kinship. But though a native changes his residence, he does not lose his ownership in the land of the village where he was born. This principle is brought out quite clearly in some recent purchases of land by the Mandated Government. The selling of land [425/77] is an innovation, brought in by the white Government, principally for the benefit of planters. When any such purchase is made, the consent of all the mature people of the village must be gained. If some village-owned land is sold to the Government, a man born in the village, but who has moved away to another, will return to his own village to receive the part of the payment which is due to him. It is considered that the land of the village where he was born belongs to him, or, as one native put it, to him and his mother, as residence is matrilocal and lineage matrilineal. For a concrete example, a man born at Ambwa married a woman from the village of Libba and went to live there. When some Ambwa land was sold, he went back to get his share in the payment, for, as he explained, this was his mother's village and his. Should any of the Libba land be sold he is not entitled to any of the payment. His children and his wife will receive a share, and sometimes his wife's relatives will give him a small part of the payment, not

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM10
Lesu

because it is due to him, but because it is a gesture of polite generosity to one who is living in their village.

In the past the land owned by members of the clan had no utilitarian function. It was merely land with which one had close totemic connections and where one's *gas* or double dwelt. It was never planted on or built upon because the native was afraid of the *tsinanis* animals and *gas*. But with the coming of the white man and his coconut plantations this custom has been changed. The native saw the white man plant on the *tsinanis* land and saw also that nothing disastrous happened; so he lost his fear and now plants on it, although he retains his belief in the *gas* and *tsinanis* animals. Sometimes this clan land is too far away from its owners for them to plant it, so people of other clans, who may live close to it, will make their gardens there. If they have a large crop, these people will usually give a portion of it to the real owners, and should the land be sold to the white man, those who have gardens on it are entitled to a share of the payment. But they are not considered the real owners, for while they may have their gardens on the land, they may not bequeath it at their death. The land automatically is bequeathed to the clan descendants of the members who own the land. The ownership of this clan land never passes out of the hands of those members who have totemic and clan association with it.

However, there are ways of circumventing temporarily this traditional rule, and one example of such circumvention came to my notice. A man named Noas, who belonged to the *Tsililia* clan, at the time of his father's death made a payment for his father's clan land (on which he wanted to plant) to the members of his father's clan, which was *Sinpop*, and to which the land would naturally have belonged. At Noas' death the land will go back to the *Sinpop* clan, the members of which will make a return payment to the members of Noas' clan. This is the only case I found in which one individual, rather than a group, was considered an owner,

1: Powdermaker E-5 (1929-1930) 1933 OM10 New Ireland OM:0
Lesu

and in discussing it with native informants, they said it was because he paid for it with *tsera*. It has already been noted that land, as a rule, is inherited automatically, and this is the only instance of a "sale" of land (even though a temporary one) between natives.

While land is communally owned, vegetables, trees, and anything planted on it are individually owned. Thus, if a man plants a tree, this tree and its fruit belong exclusively to him, and at his death will belong to his maternal nephew, or some other clan relative. But the land on which the tree is planted retains its communal ownership.

The same principle holds for the sea. There is no private ownership of rights in fishing. The sea and the reefs are open to all. If a man makes a trap in the shallow water off the reef, the fish in it will belong to him. But anyone can make such a trap in any place.

Thus the land and sea, from which come the means of livelihood for these people, are communally owned, and only the actual fruits of one's labour are private possessions. Objects owned individually are: ornaments, spears, implements, houses, clothes, and currency.

SEASONAL VARIATIONS

The utilization of these communally owned natural resources for individual needs might be called work. Production is much the same all the year round, and there are very few seasonal variations. The two seasons are: (1) that of the South-East Trade Winds, which is the dry season, and (2) the one of the North-East Monsoon, which brings the rain. The former begins in April and lasts until December. But this is the wet tropics, so that even in the so-called dry season there is usually some rain once every twenty-four hours, most frequently in the night. During the rainy season there is less fishing and a slight lessening in general outdoor